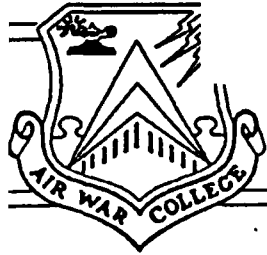


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Research Report

DESERT STORM LESSONS LEARNED

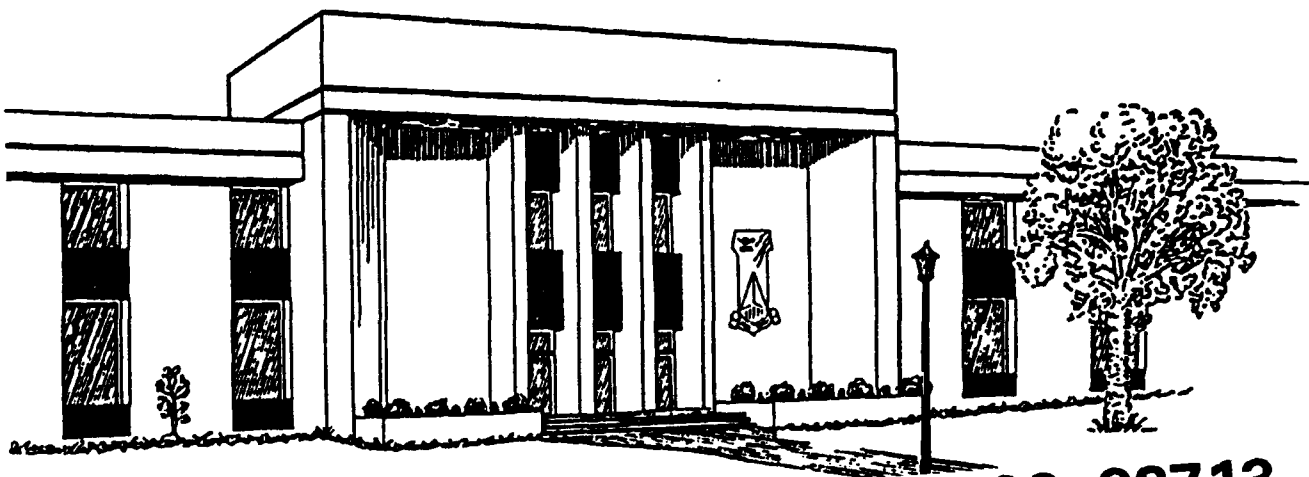
- MIDDLE EASTERN AND ASIAN PERSPECTIVES -

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Air University
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Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama

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AIR WAR COLLEGE

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DESERT STORM LESSONS LEARNED

- Middle Eastern and Asian Perspectives -

by

Gordon R. Middleton
Colonel , USAF

A REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
IN
FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM
REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Kent E. Harbaugh

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

11 January 1992

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DESERT STORM LESSONS LEARNED

- Middle Eastern and Asian Perspectives -

Abstract:

The author surveys Middle Eastern and Asian reactions to the 1990-1991 Persian Gulf war. The importance of regional security arrangements in the post-Cold War environment, the economic benefits of East-West cooperation, and the responsibility of Japan to militarily defend its own economic interests were the lessons of the Gulf war to Middle Eastern and Asian observers. To the extent that Saddam Hussein's political objective was recognition as the leader of the Arab world, he may have "won" the war. In emphasizing the importance of understanding non-American perspectives on war, the author recommends applying the Red Flag tactical training concept at the operational level of warfare.

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Draft 11 Jan 91

DESERT STORM LESSONS LEARNED

- Middle Eastern and Asian Perspectives -

Victory is by nature insolent and haughty.

-- Cicero (*Pro Marcello*)

INTRODUCTION

It is critical for the United States to assess the lessons learned from Desert Shield and Desert Storm from non-American perspectives and take them into account in the development of military operational art for the future. This results from several factors.

First, because the Persian Gulf war was such an overwhelming Allied success, gaining insights from it may prove difficult for the US. As Cicero said, "Victory is by nature insolent and haughty." (*Pro Marcello*) In a similar vein, the US Air Force Chief of Staff recently stated that our opponents likely learned more from this war than we did. (72:17)

Second the need for understanding other perspectives on this conflict is underscored by the traditional tendency of American racial, cultural and technological arrogance to cloud US perceptions. as in the case of Japan in the 1940s, China in the

1950s, and Vietnam in the 1960s. (65:12A)

The thesis of this paper is that the US may learn most by understanding what others learned from the Gulf war. The increased emphasis in US national security policy on international consensus and cooperation (181:28) dictates that this search for lessons from the Gulf war take a broad look at political, economic, and military developments of this conflict.

What did others learn from the Gulf war?¹ Mary Fitzgerald has documented the Soviet military reaction to the Gulf War. (182:16-44) This article reviews Middle Eastern and Asian views first on the political perspectives on the Gulf War, followed by an examination of the strategy of both sides, and finally a look at operational military considerations. In conclusion, this paper draws lessons for the US from these Middle Eastern and Asian perspectives on the Gulf war and makes recommendations on how these lessons can be used to improve US capabilities at the operational level of warfare.

POLITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE GULF WAR

Middle Eastern and Asian observers reported a broad range of political perspectives on the Gulf war. These included comments on the dynamics of the Coalition, Islamic reactions to the war, perceptions of Saddam Hussein as an Islamic hero, and reactions to the television coverage of the war. Political perspectives on the

¹President Bush stated the primary lessons learned in the United States from Desert Storm included an appreciation of the value of air power, of stealth capabilities, of highly trained and motivated people, and of defensive missile systems..(1:515-516)

post-war environment addressed arms sales, collective security, and internal political issues - particularly in India, China, and Japan.

Coalition Dynamics

The Coalition purpose was accurately perceived in the Third World. The Economist version ("To keep the hands of a ruthless blackmailer off the windpipe of the world economy.") was repeated in the Third World press. (17:5) There was recognition in Lebanese and Syrian reports of a broader purpose to be served, as well -- to indicate once and for all that aggression will no longer be tolerated. (123:44; 131:67)

Though most Asian countries supported the US in this crisis, that support in most instances was not whole-hearted. Some in the Middle East and Asia, including China (73:10), South Korea (74:11) and the PLO (85:5), perceived commercial motives behind the US involvement. Dependence on imported oil from the Gulf, shaky trade balances, and other economic factors led to the support of US policy by Japan and South Korea (75:12), Indonesia (76:13), India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (77:14; 84:847-848; 101:57)

Islamic Reaction to the Gulf War

The Islamic reaction to the war was primarily political in nature and critical of the US. The reaction was widespread that the US obstructed settlement of the Palestinian problem. (20:11; 73:10; 76:13; 77:14; 79:11; 84:856; 92:65; 97:18; 102:59; 107:14; 109:93; 120:32; 125:62; 130:9; 133:62; 137:52) This perception is the source of considerable tension in US relations with Iran.

Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. It also affects attitudes toward the US in Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines. (63:473-478)

The war created intense debates within, and between, Muslim and non-Muslim communities, strained religious tolerance, and tested the strength of national unity within many of the South East Asian nations. Tensions were especially high in Pakistan and Indonesia. For many Asian Muslims, Saddam Hussein symbolizes the Islamic struggle against Western domination, against continued Israeli occupation of Palestine and Arab lands, and against economic injustice. (28:27; 73:10; 76:13; 100:54; 103:3) Linkage of the Gulf war to the Palestinian problem was widespread. (95:5; 103:4; 143:6; 119:56; 122:10; 126:66) An extensive analysis of the crisis by a middle eastern writer pointed out the "lack of consensus in the Muslim countries over who has the right to interpret political Islam, national interest and political identity." (63:480)

Saddam as Islamic Hero

As an Indian press report noted, the Gulf war spawned "a Saddam cult." (55:21) In the eyes of many Syrians and PLO leader 'Arafat, Saddam Hussein is one of the Arab world's most outstanding leaders because he stood up to the West and Israel. (55:21; 129:1) Iraq's use of the SCUD missile made it the favorite mascot of pro-Saddam Arabs. (55:21; 127:73) Middle Eastern commentators have noted that part of Saddam's appeal included the prospect of a redistribution of wealth in the region. (63:482) A Palestinian academic summarized Hussein's appeal to the more radical elements

when he said, "At least he has made the arrogant Gulfies and Israelis feel the terror we have felt for three generations."
(57:20)

The popular Indian press described Saddam as the Middle East's first truly pan-Arabic figure. He unleashed an onslaught of vicious anti-Americanism across the entire Islamic world when he called for war between the *Ummah* (the Islamic world) and America to liberate the holy places. (46:20) Demonstrations supporting Saddam and demanding withdrawal of troops from Saudi Arabia took place in Algeria (86:10), Bangladesh (88:50), Morocco (87:14; 105b:13; 106:14), Sudan (96:9), Pakistan (111:104), India (112:105; 117:47), Egypt (114:6), and Jordan (127:73). As Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Sa'adoun Hammadi said, "Whether you like it or not, Iraq will emerge a stronger threat to the West after this war." (53:15) Even after military developments swung clearly against Saddam, the press in Iraq still spoke of "certain political developments" as an Iraqi victory. (126:65; 136:51)

Television Coverage of Gulf War

Television coverage of the Gulf War by the US-based Cable News Network (CNN) was a best seller in the Third World, but raised delicate issues. In India, there was high demand for the immediate hi-tech coverage of the war. Some localities even ran out of dish antennae to receive the CNN signal. (49:24-25) Concerned with national prerogatives, New Delhi frostily declined a CNN offer to provide programming for broadcast over the India satellite. (80:16-17) The popularity of the CNN broadcasts challenged the legitimacy of Indian video news censorship laws (78:17) and raised Israeli

concerns of "cultural colonization." (147:47) In spite of national and cultural concerns, the global village watched the television war, courtesy of the Western media, and was fascinated.

Control of the Western media coverage of the war by Allied governments was seen as a significant element in the Western strategy by Middle Eastern and Asian commentators. Western control of the major media outlets was perceived to be complete and biased against Third World perspectives and interests. (23:13; 91:61; 113:3) Iranian commentary discounted Western coverage as under the "strict censorship of US intelligence officers." (136:50) Israeli reports noted that the media was "a natural vehicle for psychological warfare." (132b:56-57) Within Israel, the media was crucial in getting instructions to the public and played a key role in the restrained Israeli response to the SCUD attacks by Iraq. (147:46,48)

Views on Post-war Environment

There is convergence of Middle Eastern and Asian views on the post-war issues for the Gulf: regional security, economic and democratic development. (29:4; 76:13; 134:85; 148:7) Where they lack agreement is in the approach to solve these issues.

While many Middle Eastern and Asian sources agree with the concept of regional security arrangements, a permanent US presence in the Gulf is a contentious issue. (63:474) Spokesmen in a number of countries, including Jordan (133:62), Iran (38:54; 110:93; 133:62; 134:85; 138:55; 139:58; 142:64 184:85), Egypt (149:12), India (92:65), and Thailand (76:13) are critical of US forces remaining in the Gulf. Egyptian Liberal Party spokesman, Mustafa

Kamil Murad (148:7) and others (35:6), have proposed an Arab security force for the region. On the other hand, Gulf Coast Council (GCC) Secretary General, 'Abdallah Bisharah of Kuwait, forecast a "new pragmatic phase" in gulf security arrangements (121:1) and like others in the GCC anticipates defense arrangements with other states (35:6) and continued American, British, and French presence in the region. (25:17) Chinese reports predict a NATO-like organization in the region, anti-American reaction to continued US military presence in Arab countries, and the need for economic advancement in addition to security structures to achieve stability in the region. (43:11; 145:6)

Likewise, there are different perspectives on economic and democratic development in the region. Commentators in Iran, the PLO, and Egypt focus on Arab-Arab assistance and cooperation, including an Arab common market and the development of oil resources. (134:85; 135:8; 148:7) Others emphasize greater cooperation with neighboring states, the European Economic Community and the West. (29:4) GCC Secretary General Bisharah attributes the disaster in Kuwait to a mistaken belief in Arab fraternity ("Arab emotional chants and songs"), and predicts future relations will be based on tangible interests of the Gulf states with its neighbors, including Iran and Turkey. (121:1-2)

Discussion of democratic political reforms is limited. There is sporadic recognition for the need for wider participation in local governments, (29:4; 134:85; 148:7), but little attention is devoted to developing means to this end.

Post-war Arms Sales

Asian countries viewed the war and the issue of post-war arms sales in largely economic terms. (46:13; 81:13) Indian press accounts highlighted the very high costs of the war (estimating costs of \$89 billion for a three-month war). (46:13) They further raised concerns over the loss of exports to Iraq and Kuwait, the significant costs of repatriating Indians from the war zone, and the impact on India's trade deficit and foreign exchange reserves. (50:28)

Chinese analysts of the war emphasized economic and financial impacts of the war, especially on oil and arms sales. (40:11-14; 41:14; 42:13; 81:14) Chinese accounts note that many countries hope to buy advanced weaponry for their arsenals in response to the Gulf conflict (39:18; 45:11) and that developed countries continue to sell weapons. A Chinese view is that arms control efforts are a form of trade protectionism that limit China's international trade, (44:19) including the sale of nuclear capabilities. (169:14) In spite of growing sensitivity to Western criticism of its arms export policy, (164b:1) China will not deny itself the economic benefits of the arms trade as long as other leading countries continue to export arms. (169:14)

Impetus to ASEAN Security Discussions

The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait fuelled discussions of regional security within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The Malaysian Foreign Minister's previous suggestion that ASEAN's agenda for the 1990s include a defense community has received

renewed visibility. (157:29) The war in the Gulf demonstrated to Asian observers that ASEAN must actively shape its own security arrangements. (155:31)

Indian Politics

Domestic politics influenced Indian reaction to the Gulf war. Blaming Saddam for fluctuating oil prices helped the Indian government push through its tough deflationary measures. (50:28) The war also provided an opportunity for public consideration of options to revitalize the Indian economy. (50:31)

The war was not without liabilities for India. The conflict backed India into a no-win situation with its Gulf neighbors. Pro-Saddam factions accused India of being an American lackey for allowing US planes to refuel in India. (89:51; 90:52; 98:47) Kuwait and other Gulf countries labeled India a Saddam stooge for subsequently stopping Allied refuelling and because of a widely publicized pro-Iraqi statement by a senior Indian government official. The price is that India is not likely to get much of the reconstruction prize in Kuwait and may have eliminated itself from future political influence in the Gulf for some time. (60:22; 84:857; 141:48)

Chinese Political Benefits

China gained political benefits from limited cooperation with the Western Coalition. China voted in favor of eleven resolutions at the United Nations demanding Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait, but abstained on the resolution allowing use of military force against Iraq. In exchange for even this limited

support; the US government lifted the prohibition on senior-level exchanges with China. The December 1990 meeting between President Bush and the Chinese Foreign Minister and the November 1991 visit by US Secretary of State Baker to China confirmed the lifting of the sanctions imposed in reaction to the crackdown that followed the Tiananmen Square demonstrations in 1989. (162:1-2)

Japanese Politics

The Coalition war with Iraq resulted in Japanese developments that departed from its political pattern established since World War II. Since the late 1970s, US pressure mounted on Japan to contribute to the security interests of the Western Alliance, including the Iran-Iraq war. (151:88) Japan's policy continued to be quiet support of US policy during periods of relative calm, but to follow the policies of the European Economic Community during crises. Japan used its massive financial power to smooth over diplomatic crises and relied on US military muscle if required. (151:88)

Consistent with this traditional approach, Japan initially limited its support to financial assistance for the Coalition. (154:3) Japan's Asian neighbors favored this economic approach (152:3) and domestic Japanese sentiment supported interpreting the "peace" Constitution to prohibit deployment of Self Defense Forces (SDF) outside Japanese territory. This led to the defeat of Prime Minister Kaifu's proposals to assist evacuation of refugees or to allow SDF troops to serve as noncombatant specialists behind the lines of the multinational force. (161:5)

The lack of Japanese presence in the Gulf created negative

economic and diplomatic effects. Together with slow delivery on its aid pledges, it triggered critical reactions in the US (155:5) and fuelled Japanese expectations of a major backlash from the US and other allies. As a result, a downturn in car sales in the West was forecast. (158:32-33)

The Kaifu government eventually sent minesweepers and a supply ship to the Gulf to assist mine-clearing operations in late April 1991. (82:19) Over objections from peace activists, the government decided to dispatch these vessels "to guarantee the safety of trading ships." (159:3)

The economic factor was significant in the decision to deploy SDF forces overseas for the first time. Prime Minister Kaifu stressed Japan's desire to make physical as well as financial contributions to the Gulf peace efforts during his subsequent ten-day tour of Southeast Asia. (160:1) He emphasized Japan's evolving role in the world and determination to resolve domestic issues to enable Japan to participate in U.N. peacekeeping activities. (160:5)

Japan may expand its international involvement beyond the token military action in the Gulf war cleanup. Former Finance Minister Kiichi Miyazawa stated Japan should play a leading role in the Gulf postwar environment. He has recommended active Japanese participation in reconstruction, arms control, and a Middle East fund which would match in scale the post World War II Marshall Plan. (155:1)

Japan may have concluded that defense of its economic interests cannot be limited exclusively to the financial arena. If Japan makes its entrance on the international diplomatic and

military stage to defend its economic empire, it would be the most significant political development of the war.

STRATEGY IN THE GULF WAR

Against this background of political perceptions, Third World commentators made a variety of assessments of Iraqi and Coalition military strategies in the Gulf war.

Iraqi Strategy

Comparison of Iraq's strategy with that of North Vietnam in its war with the US pervaded Middle Eastern and Asian analyses. Hussein, like North Vietnamese General Giap, devised a strategy based on the inability of the US simultaneously to absorb significant casualties and to sustain popular support for the war. The Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter voiced the common perception that in a war with the US, Saddam believed that the destruction of American manpower is the key. Hussein believed "if the body count is high enough, the Coalition's will to fight will crumble." (33:19)

Analyses in Asian and Indian publications recognized the political and operational differences between the wars in Vietnam and Iraq. Asian publications point out the terrain in Kuwait was ideal for US tanks and high technology systems; Iraq did not have the massive aid from the Soviet Union and China that Vietnam did; (33:19) and whereas the Vietnamese fought for their own land, the Iraqis fought to retain occupied territory. (34:11; 56:19) Indian authors noted in the Gulf conflict, in contrast to the Vietnam war,

the US was largely free from central European commitments and fielded a volunteer army. (56:19)

Indian reports noted the Iraqi reaction to the overwhelming Allied air power, the Iraqi camouflage and deception efforts, and Saddam's orchestrated media spots. (46:12-14) Saddam attempted to deny access to high-value targets by moving vital equipment, command centers, and decision-making headquarters to the safety of underground basements. The Iraqis planted scores of decoy missile launchers and lit fires under decoys to fool satellite infra-red sensors and to cause the Allies to waste raids on decoys. (46:14) Saddam orchestrated media spots, but they coalesced US popular support for the war and incensed US leadership. (46:12)

Iraqi Alternatives

Iraq had alternative courses of action. Senior Lebanese officials and Indian sources noted that Iraq could have politicized the military action by getting Israel directly involved in the war. The SCUD attacks on Israel obviously had this objective. These sources noted a chemical attack might have brought a nuclear response from Israel, but it also would have unified the Arabs, broken the Coalition, and might have brought Pakistani nuclear capabilities into the war on the side of Iraq. (51:34-35; 123:44)

Indian sources discussed options to exploit the political weaknesses of the Alliance. This approach would have made the war last as long as possible, forced a ground war before Iraqi forces were degraded by a long aerial bombardment, and ensured as many US casualties as possible. These same Indian sources pointed out Saddam miscalculated in not understanding the disadvantage his

forces faced because of the considerable technology gap between the two armies. (51:35; 52:35)

Allied Strategy

Middle Eastern sources described the Allied military strategy² as getting Iraq out of Kuwait. Reported additional US goals were to ensure that Iraq's nuclear, chemical, biological and conventional military capabilities were destroyed and to protect Western economic interests in the region. (51:133; 129:2)

According to an article in an Asian journal,³ the Allied campaign followed Air-Land Battle Doctrine.⁴ The same article also described the Allied long-range planning, coordination and timing, communications, pin-point accuracy, and high speed maneuver as a classic desert campaign. (23:14) The name of the Allied doctrine is less important to non-US observers than the fact it was overwhelmingly successful.

Not all observers were completely awestruck by the Allies. An Indian source voiced the opinion that the lack of coherent response

² The Allied policy objective was to remove Iraqi forces from Kuwait. The military strategy was to pin down the Iraqi forces in Kuwait, cut them off from their supply lines, and then defeat them. (179:6)

³ These views are those of US, British, or Australian authors that appear in Middle Eastern or Asian journals. In the absence of indigenous assessments, they are the perspectives in the Middle Eastern and Asian public discussion of these topics.

⁴ Air-Land Battle, the doctrine of the US Army, envisions a combined arms effort in direct combat with enemy ground forces, together with deep penetrations on the ground and in the air to interdict enemy reinforcements attempting to enter the battle. The extended strategic bombing campaign prior to the ground war was not Air-Land Battle. When the ground battle began, it followed Air-Land Battle doctrine.

by Iraqi forces made Allied forces look good, but left them essentially untested. In this commentator's opinion, US military morale, discipline, and willingness to "close with the enemy, to do and to dare and to die," independent of fancy technology or force multipliers, was not proven. (51:34)

MILITARY OPERATIONAL ART

Moving from the political and strategic aspects of the Gulf war to the operational level of warfare,⁵ Middle Eastern and Asian observers emphasized operational factors in the Allied victory, the civil impact of the Allied air campaign, and vulnerabilities of the Coalition.

Operational Factors in Allied Victory

Asian defense journal articles⁶ assessed that superior Allied operational capabilities contributed to the victory. Coalition capabilities facilitated the implementation of a deception plan that yielded total surprise. The Air-Land Battle doctrine worked to perfection and nullified Iraqi numerical superiority in land forces. Superior military morale, stamina, staff work, training, tactics, logistics, and special forces were all in favor of the Allies. (20:11; 21:8; 51:34; 163:8)

⁵The operational level of warfare concerns military activity associated with an entire theater of operations (e.g., the Pacific theater of operations in World War II or the Middle Eastern theater of operations in Desert Storm). It includes theater campaign planning, theater-wide operations, significant operations involving multiple service components within the theater, and major force deployments and reinforcements to the theater.

⁶ See footnote number three.

Allied speed, concentration of effort, and firepower were overwhelming. The Coalition's ability to fight 24 hours per day kept the operational pace much too fast for Iraqi forces. The capabilities and reliability of Allied equipment was vastly superior. Iraq found it impossible to fight a conventional ground war while conceding command of the air. (23:13)

Reactions to the Gulf War in Asian defense journals¹ note the clear advantage the Allies derived from superior command, control, communications and intelligence capabilities. (18:6; 21:7; 22:9; 31:8; 163:9) The Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) displayed every Iraqi movement in the air on Allied radar screens and coordinated Allied aircraft actions against Iraqi air forces. The Joint Surveillance and Target Attack Radar System (J-STARS) kept track of Hussein's ground forces, allowed Allied strikes against Iraqi units whenever they moved, and was a critical link in locating SCUD launchers.

Many of these same sources noted the important role US space assets played in the planning and control of Allied operations. At least 12 different series of military satellites supported the Allies, including imaging, radar, meteorological, missile warning, and communications systems. Signals intelligence systems provided the first substantive warning of the Kuwait invasion. (31:8) An Indian author highlighted that space systems helped India track the oil slick in the Gulf. (99:43)

One of the most important space systems was the NAVSTAR Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system. It enabled Allied forces to

¹ See footnote number three.

know exactly where they were in all weather conditions, day and night. Coalition forces were not constrained to remain on marked roads, which was critical to the flanking movement that surprised the Iraqis. An Asian journal noted the Gulf war was the first war in which space systems played a "vital and decisive role." (163:12)

Indian sources concluded the war "proved the cost effective utility of missile systems." (84:860) This lesson has already been used in India to justify increased priority for missile systems of all classes (84:860) and is reflected in indications of advanced missile sales to Saudi Arabia, Syria, Pakistan, and Iran. (164a:1,29) High technology systems received extensive notariety in the Gulf war, but Third World abilities to acquire these expensive systems is not uniform.⁸

An author in an Asian defense journal⁹ emphasized that the Allied campaign was dependent on the extended period of time Coalition forces had in Saudi Arabia prior to hostilities. The Allies had the luxury of August to January to transport troops, weapon systems, and supplies to the region. Additionally, they had time to coordinate their plans after they arrived in-theater, and to update their training and tactics in the desert environment.

⁸ The Gulf war is credited with an increased emphasis on high-quality military systems. According to industrialists at a recent air show, the Middle Eastern market for low-cost, low-tech weapons "is evaporating." (166:1) Chinese, Pakistani, Indonesian and Brazilian firms are struggling with U.S. high-tech domination of the arms market since the Gulf war. (166:1,45) The move toward high-technology systems has spurred Israeli development of their own satellite capabilities. (22:9; 132b:56)

The high-technology emphasis is not without exceptions. Economic realities are causing ASEAN to lean toward purchase of the less expensive British Hawk jet fighter over the more technically sophisticated F-16. (83:11)

⁹ See footnote number three.

During the months prior to hostilities, Allied cooperation and detailed operational planning were built on vital operational intelligence and familiarization with the desert environment. (21:6)

Allied Air Campaign

The Allied air campaign impressed observers from Pakistan to Australia, but was considered excessive and exorbitantly costly in civilian casualties. (22:9; 140:58) An Asian defense journal article stated that the 20,000 tons of bombs dropped on Iraq every day for six weeks approached the one million tons dropped on Germany in World War II.¹⁰ The Algerian Foreign Minister stated the campaign dropped "daily the equivalent of Hiroshima" on Iraq. (104:8) An Iranian commentary cited "savage methods" in the Allied "war of attrition." (118:53) Indian opposition party leaders cited deaths of 10,000 and casualties of 30,000 in Iraq halfway through the bombing. (124:51) Jordanian reaction criticized the targeting of Iraq's "children, elderly, and women." (116:40) The Tunisian Foreign Minister and a senior Iranian parliamentarian voiced their opinion that the air attacks violated the United Nations resolutions because of their violence and civilian casualties. (115:8; 108:93) Reflecting a widely held view of the destructiveness of the air campaign, a British author in an Asian journal voiced the opinion that an air campaign of this magnitude

¹⁰ 'Arafat stated there were five times as many bombs dropped on Iraq as in World War II on Germany. (135:9) United States Air Force Chief of Staff, General Merrill McPeak, stated in a 15 March 1991 news conference that 88,500 tons of ordinance were dropped in the 43 days of the conflict. His figures included 6,520 tons of precision or "smart" bombs. (183:1)

needs "greater political input." (22:10)

The air campaign was reported to be so devastating that many observers in the Middle East and Asia questioned whether the motivation of the US forces was to destroy Iraq and its people. (124:51; 128:102; 132a:67; 133:62; 135:8; 142:64) Muslim scholars wrote that Iraq was "burned down and destroyed." (105a:8) An opposition political leader in Pakistan called it "genocide." (128:102) Military officials in Sudan criticized the campaign. (96:9) as did the Army Chief in Pakistan (94:70; 102:59). Accounts in India compared the results to a "hi-tech, 20th century version of the sacking of conquered cities by medieval warriors," (59:28) leaving a "blackened, burned-out" Iraq. (56:12) Public protests against the bombing campaign in Jordan (120:32) and Pakistan (79:11; 128:102) underscored the breadth of this perception.¹¹

Allied Vulnerabilities

In addition to assessing the power of the Coalition forces in the Gulf, Middle Eastern and Asian observers also noted that the Allies were not without vulnerabilities. These included potential problems in the dependence on a contract surface fleet and limited military airlift capabilities, and the nature of the US domestic

¹¹ These assessments are in stark contrast to reports in the Western press on Allied "precision" bombing and "smart" weapons that were touted as "downright humane (because) they spare civilian lives, limit destruction and promise quick results." (172:51; 176:15) Western press reports recognized the inevitable damage that could result from the strategic bombing campaign, but termed Iraq "stunned,...but far from destroyed." (177:62) That Allied weapons were effective in limiting damage to civilian targets is supported by the small number of civilian targets Iraq claimed were hit. (178:38-39)

support for the war.

Asian defense journal articles¹² accent vulnerabilities of the Allied contract surface fleet. The entire Allied effort was highly dependent on contract surface shipping, with ninety-five percent of all ammunition, food, spares, and fuel moved by surface shipment. (26:19) Had a merchant ship been damaged or sunk in the Gulf war, Western governments would have had difficulty finding sufficient ships and crews willing to accept the war risk. This could have posed an "enormous problem at a critical stage in the maintenance of the war machine." (26:19) Had this vital lifeline been disrupted, the Allies might not have had the overwhelming military strength or the political resolve to pursue the war. (26:19; 30:5)

Asian defense journal articles¹³ punctuate similar problems with the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF). The CRAF fleet was vital in providing rapid supply to the Gulf. The CRAF carried over half of all the personnel transported in support of the war, but this was feasible only in the essentially peacetime environment that accompanied the Allied logistics build-up. War demands resulted in C-5s averaging 10.5 flight hours per day and C-141s 12 hours per day. The military airlift fleet would not have been able to support the war by itself. (31:7-8)

An Indian columnist highlighted the strong domestic US support for the war, but questioned how long it would have endured. This author emphasized that the American public would only support a short war (support for the war "does not necessarily extend to next

¹² See footnote number three.

¹³ See footnote number three.

month or next week.") and was very sensitive to American casualties. US domestic support for the war "could face a disastrous reversal if cameras leave SCUDs and Tomahawks and Patriots to focus instead on body bags arriving home." (48:21-22)

MIDDLE EASTERN AND ASIAN CONCLUSIONS FROM THE WAR

What was the nature of Middle Eastern and Asian reactions to the Gulf war of 1990-1991? Further, what are the implications of their political, strategic, and operational military reactions to the war?

Political Perspectives

There are significant political implications from the Middle Eastern and Asian reactions to the war. First, Middle Eastern and Asian articles place significant emphasis on political and economic dimensions of the war. Chinese and Japanese assessments clearly view the entire episode through the lens of concern for their economic interests. Economic considerations drove the Japanese decision to use their military forces. Indian coverage was a combination of concern for the dynamics of regional influence and impact on domestic Indian political and economic issues.

Second, the emphasis in Middle Eastern and Asian sources on political and economic aspects of the war is indicative of why some of the key regional players sided with the Western Coalition. The ideological and "new world order" rationale for the intervention were negligible considerations in their decisions to support what was seen in many instances as an unpopular, US-dominated stance. The domestic US rationale for the war versus the political and

economic self interest responsible for many key smaller countries supporting the Coalition stand in stark contrast. The ability of the Bush administration to recognize and manage this aspect of the Coalition was significant and may be one of the most important lessons not to be forgotten in future international conflict.

Third, much written on major systems performance by Western authors in Middle Eastern or Asian publications reflects a Western need to justify the continued acquisition of such systems in the face of a draw down of defense budgets, Third World desire to upgrade weapons inventories with advanced systems that won the Gulf war, and the increased level of competition among Western contractors. (36:29) The Soviets are not the only ones faced with the need to convert defense industrial capabilities to other avenues. The marked lack of indigenous Middle Eastern and Asian writing on the performance of the Coalition's advanced weapon systems is due to a combination of technical, cultural, and political realities within their own countries.

Fourth, the Gulf war contained notable lessons, for Middle Eastern and Asian nations. Countries in the Gulf gained a new appreciation for the need for regional, cooperative security arrangements. India recognized that the imperatives of the non-aligned movement are no longer as important as economics in the post-Cold War era. Regional influence through cooperation with the West may prove more beneficial than maintaining a non-aligned stance, but it is not without risks. China also reaped benefits from cooperating with the West, but arms sales remain a contentious issue. Japan belatedly realized that preserving its economic interests requires broad participation in resolving international

issues.

Strategy in the Gulf War

Allied military strategy prevailed because it brought superior technical and military capabilities to bear on Iraqi forces. Additionally, the Western media played a profound role in shaping the outcome in the eyes of Middle Eastern and Asian observers. From their perspective, whether there was a possible strategy for Saddam Hussein to attain his military objectives was left unanswered.

To the extent that Hussein's political objective was recognition as the leader of the Arab world, he may have "won" the war. In the end, Saddam may prove himself the superior student of Clausewitz. It is apparent that Hussein understands that "war is nothing but the continuation of policy with other means." (156:69) Whether he or others recognize and respond to the lessons of Desert Storm remains to be seen on the next field of battle.

Military Operational Art

Middle Eastern and Asian views on the conduct of the war operations have a different emphasis from those in the West. The air war was not trumpeted as an unquestioned success. In many quarters it typified the Western menace to non-Western society and culture. The Gulf War also emphasized the role of missiles and space-based command, control, communications, and intelligence capabilities. It also demonstrated the need for a coalition to have a period of time to coordinate operational planning prior to hostilities in order to maximize its effectiveness.

The Gulf War highlighted operational vulnerabilities in the Western Coalition to Middle Eastern and Asian observers. Potential problems in surface and air mobility in the Gulf War may become more dramatic as the US draws down its military forces. The precedent the Gulf War set for being very short and overwhelmingly decisive together with the ability of modern media to bring the scenes of war into every home on the nightly news may have disastrous effects on future domestic support for US military action.

The defeat of Iraqi forces demonstrated that dated Russian equipment is inferior to current Western capabilities. The Iraqi defeat of Kuwait demonstrated that superior technical capabilities do not always win. Kuwait showed how ineffective even modern weaponry can be. Kuwait did not fight for even six hours. (53:15) The lasting lesson of the Gulf conflict for the Arab world may be the ineffectiveness of Arab use of western weaponry.¹⁴

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

What can the US learn from the Middle Eastern and Asian reactions to the war? Two concepts deserve further consideration. First as Sun Tzu emphasized many centuries ago, (168:18) it is critical that the US understand the views of other nations and cultures in order to adequately fashion national security strategy. Second, this knowledge should become the point of departure for US

¹⁴ Factors of culture, organization, and infrastructure account for the difference in performance of the Kuwait resistance to the Iraqi invasion and that of the Arab elements in the Allied defeat of Iraqi forces.

training, planning, and war-gaming at the operational level of warfare in preparation for implementing that strategy in future conflicts.

Value of Non-US Views.

The United States Air Force recognizes the value of simulated "Red-on-Blue" training. In the face of disappointing loss rates in Korean and early Vietnam air engagements, the USAF established training programs against "aggressor" aircraft. The goal of the Red Flag exercises that came from these experiences is to emulate enemy aerial tactics so that US forces develop counter-tactics to defeat the enemy in actual combat. (71:26) The success of US and Allied air forces in Desert Storm in some measure reflects the effectiveness of such realistic training.

Operational Level Red Flag.

The US military should extend the Red Flag concept from the tactical to the operational level of warfare. The Red Flag training approach has proved itself in the development of tactics for aerial engagements and it has as much potential to improve operational military art as well. This approach would: emphasize the importance of the operational level of military warfare; provide increases in military effectiveness that could partially compensate for budget-driven force structure decrements; and provide the majority of its benefits independent of likely reductions in individual unit training.

In practice, what would an operational level Red Flag be? It would involve teams dedicated to understanding foreign perspectives

and devising scenarios threatening to regional US interests. These scenarios would be used in war games and as inputs to theater operations plans. A team would view a region from non-US perspectives and devise approaches to deny, degrade, or defeat US military capabilities in that region. An iterative review of these scenarios with the theater command planning staffs and use of these scenarios in war-gaming and exercises would result in improvements in the operational art of warfare. If the improvements at the operational level prove to be comparable to those achieved at the tactical level, profound increases in military effectiveness would be obtained.

As noted by US Air Force Secretary Rice, this type of effort already is underway in numerous other countries. (164b:28) For example, Communist China's State Council recently established a National Strategy Research Center. (144:23)

The tactical air example also may be instructive in considering this proposal. Air aces consistently estimate that about eight of ten opponents never know they are under attack until it is too late. (71:24) Will US operational art continue "straight and level" until it is too late? At a minimum, an operational level Red Flag could help avoid the hubris born of current US technical superiority. One of the mottos of the Aggressor Squadron is "Be Humble." (71:27) A dose of humble pie will help the US avoid becoming "insolent and haughty" from the great victory in the Gulf war and go a long way to insure the next conflict concludes as positively as Desert Storm.

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